



United States Mission to the OSCE

Response to the Report by the Project Coordinator in Ukraine Ambassador L'ubomir Kopaj

As delivered by Ambassador Ian Kelly
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
June 16, 2011

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The United States warmly welcomes back to the Permanent Council the Project Coordinator in Ukraine, Ambassador Lubomir Kopaj. We thank you for your comprehensive report and we appreciate your dedication and strong leadership.

The United States supports your excellent work in all three dimensions. The broad range of projects demonstrates that your office is a cost-effective and useful mechanism for advancing Ukraine's implementation of OSCE commitments. We commend your efforts to strengthen your partnership with the Ukrainian government, international donors, OSCE participating States, and other international organizations to improve implementation and avoid duplication of efforts.

We also commend your strategic approach to addressing democracy development, good governance, and rule of law concerns. Ukraine had made significant strides in areas such as freedom of association, speech, and the media, and it is important that this progress be continue. We are aware of recent assessments of the state of democracy in Ukraine, which have raised concerns about some disturbing trends. The Government of Ukraine has responded, saying it is open to fair criticism, and stressed that reforms should not be implemented at the expense of democratic processes, nor infringe on human rights or freedom of the press. In this region, we hope the anti-corruption, human rights, and institutional capacity building activities carried out by the PCU will continue to be supported by the Government of Ukraine.

With important Parliamentary elections coming in 2012, we agree that your office should continue its election project in 2011 to provide expert advice and assistance to election-support activities, including strengthening training capacities of the Central Election Committee and election law reforms. We urge the Ukrainian government to approve its continuation. We recommend you utilize the expertise of ODIHR in these efforts whenever possible and appropriate.

We note your important work on media freedom through training journalists about self-regulation, helping Ukrainian broadcasters prepare for the digital switchover, and consulting with key stakeholders on the implementation of the Law on Access to Public Information. Working closely with the Representative on Freedom of the Media and Ukrainian partners, your office can provide valuable assistance to strengthen further Ukraine's independent media.

We also strongly support your substantial work of the PCU in the area of building capacity and awareness of state institutions and civil society organizations, including your emphasis on facilitating dialogue and cooperation between civil society and national and local governments. In particular, we note the emphasis in your report on the project to strengthen the rule of law. This is an area that warrants special attention.

We also commend the Office's continued efforts in the politico-military, economic, and environmental areas. In this regard, we strongly support any Ukrainian authorities' efforts in rehabilitating areas contaminated by Explosive Remnants of War. We urge enhanced efforts to ensure that there is no duplication of effort between the OSCE and the NATO Partnership for Peace Trust Fund or any other similar activities.

We welcome your activities aimed at supporting the Ukrainian Armed Forces as they downsize, and we are pleased at the success rate of 74 percent of retired military service persons finding employment within three months of training. We are pleased to learn that you have handed over some parts of this project to the Ministry of Defense and that the training programs are in place to increase sustainability.

We are glad the U.S. Government has been able to support the first phase of the project entitled "Assistance in Increasing the Efficiency of the Risk and Criminal Analyses Systems of the State Border Guard Service of Ukraine" project. We would urge other participating States to consider extra-budgetary support for this project.

We are interested in your continuing work in promoting e-Governance solutions, and look forward to learning of its results. We see value in enabling citizens to use information and communication technologies to receive better quality services from authorities and improve business development regulatory frameworks, including those relevant to foreign direct investment.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.